



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

quite distinct from that which was definitely in mind in the earlier days.

It is this new view, according to which Sigma Xi is a union of the productive workers in all of the sciences, rather than a mere senior honorary society which in certain chapters has already led to the complete abandonment of the undergraduate field.

The two functions are not really incompatible but demand for the best simultaneous working some such scheme as the proposed dual membership. With it the society will have something to offer the ambitious undergraduate far more attractive and important than a senior honor of the usual type.

When we recognize the dual functions of the society the dual membership seems natural and expedient and it may be justified without fear of encouraging even a tendency towards aristocracy or caste.

Far from being impracticable I am convinced that the new scheme will vastly simplify the present situation which leads everywhere to almost irreconcilable differences of opinion as to the interpretation of the qualifications for membership. Under the new plan instead of struggling to adapt the same definition to widely different cases we shall have two distinct standards, each easily applied. I deem the change, therefore, both workable and necessary.

FOR WHAT DOES SIGMA XI STAND?

BY OLIN H. LANDRETH

The forthcoming convention of Sigma Xi and the opportunities it offers for full consideration of desirable amendments to the constitution, make it appropriate that in the framing of such amendments, the essential ideals for which the Society stands should be clearly recognized and correctly interpreted. In determining just what are our ideals, the question is not simply:—How is the present constitution to be construed and interpreted? nor even:—What did the original framers and founders contemplate as the character of the society? To insist that these questions form the limits of our consideration of proposed amendments, is to insist that the constitution is not subject to amendment but simply to interpretation; or in other words, that the *creation* is superior to the *creator*. Like all constitutions of this character, ours is an instrument for the benefit of the Society and of the interests which the society fosters, and as such is subject to adjustment or modification of either moderate or radical extent, as the Society may determine.

If by reason of the growth and advancement in modern scientific thought and tendencies, the ideals and purposes which the founders of the Society adopted are no longer adequate or appropriate, it is clearly, not only our privilege but our duty to adjust the constitution, which is our temporary guide, so that the objects of the Society as therein expressed, shall be in harmony with the consensus of the best thought and the highest ideals of the membership. In other words, the constitution and even the Society itself are not *ends* but simply *means* or instruments which the scientific workers comprising the organization of Sigma Xi are employing to accomplish a definite and laudable ultimate purpose, viz. the advancement of science as a benefit to mankind. Similarly, it is quite evident that if indefinite, or ambiguous, or doubtful terms are found in the constitution, they should be construed and interpreted, whether for working purposes or for purposes of substitution by amendment, in full harmony with the same supreme criterion, viz. the consensus of the best thought and the highest ideals of the membership.

What is the best thought, and what are those ideals, as to aims and objects of the Society? Are those aims and objects accurately represented by the specific words of the constitution? viz. "to encourage "original investigation in science, pure and applied, . . ." When we consider the numerous functions and activities which must be concurrently employed in order that true science shall be effectively advanced, it is difficult to escape the feeling, that the statement of the object of the Society, as above quoted from the constitution, is somewhat narrow or partial, or at least is in danger from its wording of being narrowly interpreted and construed. This danger is not imaginary, for while some chapters have clearly given a broad construction to the terms of the constitution, others have shown a decided tendency to interpret the terms literally. Moreover, in the discussion of proposed amendments to the constitution, particularly with respect to the qualifications of candidates for membership, there is a very evident tendency in certain quarters to impress the narrow construction on the Society by more definite and inelastic wording in defining membership qualifications.

Can there be a doubt in any clear, broad mind, that the true ultimate purpose of the Society should be to foster and encourage that type of training and development which shall best aid in advancing science as a powerful agency for human uplift and progress? Gauged by this or an equally broad standard, the formal wording of the object of the Society as expressed in the constitution, is clearly lacking in breadth and fullness.

"Original investigation in science" is surely an exceedingly important factor in the general advancement of science, but by no means the only factor. In point of essentiality the other factors are, in the aggregate, even more important. The educational development of a strong mentality, of the power of independent thought, of accurate and clear-cut perception and logical reasoning, of critical analysis, of a sane, creative imagination, of a well-balanced judgment, the proper interpretation and correlation of the results of investigation, the formulation and verification of general principles from isolated data, the aggressive promulgation and dissemination of established scientific principles, the solution of the numerous difficult problems of application and utilization of scientific principles, and many other activities, are all essential factors in the advancement of science and in rendering available and usable the results of original investigation and research.

It falls to the lot of but few workers in science to have the ability and the opportunity to become effective in all these activities and in original research as well. Shall only those who are effective in the *latter* of these activities be entitled to the recognition of the Society? Such a policy would greatly restrict and limit the field of usefulness and opportunity of the Society and would thereby inevitably bring about the reactionary effect of dwarfing the otherwise powerful influence of the organization.

A broad and far-sighted perception and recognition of the ideal objects and opportunities of the Society of Sigma Xi in future interpretations and amendments of its constitution, would result in an expansion of the field of usefulness of the society by providing merited recognition and encouragement for several essential activities which are at present neglected and undeveloped, and would thereby augment the power and influence of the Society for which we have such affection and respect.

Union College Engineering School